



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 279**

February Session, 2016

Substitute House Bill No. 5406

*House of Representatives, March 30, 2016*

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through REP. DARGAN of the 115th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT PERMITTING PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL TO USE BLUE LIGHTS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 14-96q of the 2016 supplement to the general  
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  
3 (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

4 (a) A permit is required for the use of colored or flashing lights on  
5 all motor vehicles or equipment specified in this section except: (1)  
6 Motor vehicles not registered in this state used for transporting or  
7 escorting any vehicle or load, or combinations thereof, which is either  
8 oversize or overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued  
9 by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270; or  
10 (2) motor vehicles or equipment that are (A) equipped with lights in  
11 accordance with this section, (B) owned or leased by the federal  
12 government, the state of Connecticut, or any other state,  
13 commonwealth or local municipality, and (C) registered to such

14 governmental entity. When used in this section the term "flashing"  
15 shall be considered to include the term "revolving".

16 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, or such other person  
17 specifically identified in this section, is authorized to issue permits for  
18 the use of colored or flashing lights on vehicles in accordance with this  
19 section, at the commissioner's or such person's discretion. Any person,  
20 firm or corporation other than the state or any metropolitan district,  
21 town, city or borough shall pay an annual permit fee of twenty dollars  
22 to the commissioner for each such vehicle. Such fee shall apply only to  
23 permits issued by the commissioner.

24 (c) A blue light or lights, including flashing blue lights, may be used  
25 on a motor vehicle operated by an active member of a volunteer fire  
26 department or company, [or an active member of an] organized civil  
27 preparedness auxiliary fire company or volunteer ambulance  
28 association or company who has been issued a permit by the chief  
29 executive officer of such department, [or] company or association to  
30 use such a light while on the way to or at the scene of a fire or other  
31 emergency requiring such member's services. Such permit shall be on a  
32 form provided by the commissioner and may be revoked by such chief  
33 executive officer or successor. The chief executive officer of each  
34 volunteer fire department or company, [or] organized civil  
35 preparedness auxiliary fire company or volunteer ambulance  
36 association or company shall keep on file, [the] on forms provided by  
37 the commissioner, the names and addresses of members who have  
38 been authorized to use flashing blue lights as provided in this  
39 subsection. Such listing shall also designate the registration number of  
40 the motor vehicle on which authorized flashing blue lights are to be  
41 used.

42 [(d) A green light or lights, including flashing green lights, may be  
43 used on a motor vehicle operated by an active member of a volunteer  
44 ambulance association or company who has been issued a permit by  
45 the chief executive officer of such association or company to use such a  
46 light, while on the way to or at the scene of an emergency requiring

47 such member's services. Such permit shall be on a form provided by  
48 the commissioner and may be revoked by such chief executive officer  
49 or successor. The chief executive officer of each volunteer ambulance  
50 association or company shall keep on file on forms provided by the  
51 commissioner, the names and addresses of members who have been  
52 authorized to use flashing green lights as provided in this subsection.  
53 Such listing shall also designate the registration number of the vehicle  
54 on which the authorized flashing green lights are to be used.]

55 [(e)] (d) The commissioner may issue a permit for a red light or  
56 lights, including flashing red lights, which may be used on a motor  
57 vehicle or equipment (1) used by paid fire chiefs and their deputies  
58 and assistants, up to a total of five individuals per department, (2)  
59 used by volunteer fire chiefs and their deputies and assistants, up to a  
60 total of five individuals per department, (3) used by members of the  
61 fire police on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal during traffic  
62 directing operations at the scene of a fire or emergency, (4) used by  
63 chief executive officers of emergency medical service organizations, as  
64 defined in section 19a-175, the first or second deputies, or if there are  
65 no deputies, the first or second assistants, of such an organization that  
66 is a municipal or volunteer or licensed organization, (5) used by local  
67 fire marshals, or (6) used by directors of emergency management.

68 [(f)] (e) The commissioner may issue a permit for a yellow or amber  
69 light or lights, including flashing yellow or amber lights, which may be  
70 used on motor vehicles or equipment that are (1) specified in  
71 subsection [(e)] (d) of this section, (2) maintenance vehicles as defined  
72 in section 14-1, or (3) vehicles transporting or escorting any vehicle or  
73 load or combinations thereof, which is or are either oversize or  
74 overweight, or both, and being operated or traveling under a permit  
75 issued by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-  
76 270. A yellow or amber light or lights, including flashing yellow or  
77 amber lights, may be used without obtaining a permit from the  
78 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles on wreckers registered pursuant to  
79 section 14-66, or on vehicles of carriers in rural mail delivery service.

80        [(g)] (f) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may issue a permit for  
81 a white light or lights, including flashing white lights, which may be  
82 used on a motor vehicle or equipment as specified in subdivision (1),  
83 (2), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection [(e)] (d) of this section. A vehicle being  
84 operated by a member of a volunteer fire department or company or a  
85 volunteer emergency medical technician may use flashing white head  
86 lamps, provided such member or emergency medical technician is on  
87 the way to the scene of a fire or medical emergency and has received  
88 written authorization from the chief law enforcement officer of the  
89 municipality to use such head lamps. Such head lamps shall only be  
90 used within the municipality granting such authorization or from a  
91 personal residence or place of employment, if located in an adjoining  
92 municipality. Such authorization may be revoked for use of such head  
93 lamps in violation of this [subdivision] subsection. For the purposes of  
94 this subsection, the term "flashing white lights" shall not include the  
95 simultaneous flashing of head lamps.

96        [(h)] (g) The commissioner may issue a permit for emergency  
97 vehicles, as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-283, to use a blue,  
98 red, yellow, or white light or lights, including flashing lights or any  
99 combination thereof.

100       [(i)] (h) The commissioner may issue a permit for ambulances, as  
101 defined in section 19a-175, which may, in addition to the flashing  
102 lights allowed in subsection [(h)] (g) of this section, use flashing lights  
103 of other colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture  
104 of an ambulance. If the commissioner issues a permit for any  
105 ambulance, such permit shall be issued at the time of registration and  
106 upon each renewal of such registration.

107       [(j)] (i) Use of colored and flashing lights except as authorized by  
108 this section shall be an infraction.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	October 1, 2016	14-96q
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**PS**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

***OFA Fiscal Note***

***State Impact:*** None

***Municipal Impact:*** None

***Explanation***

This bill changes the color of the light that active members of a volunteer ambulance association or company may use on the way to or at an emergency scene which is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

***The Out Years***

***State Impact:*** None

***Municipal Impact:*** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5406*****AN ACT PERMITTING PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL TO USE BLUE LIGHTS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill changes, from green to blue, the color of the light that active members of a volunteer ambulance association or company may use on a vehicle they operate on the way to or at an emergency scene requiring their services. Others who may use blue lights, including flashing blue lights, under current law and in similar circumstances, are active members of a volunteer fire department or company or an organized civil preparedness auxiliary fire company.

The bill reduces the number of colored lights authorized for public safety vehicle use by eliminating green lights, which are currently authorized only for members of a volunteer ambulance association or company.

As is currently the case for green light users, blue light users must, by law, get a permit from the chief executive officer of the pertinent department, company, or association. The chief executive officer must keep on file, on forms provided by the motor vehicles commissioner, the names and addresses of members authorized to use flashing lights, and the documentation must designate the registration number of the motor vehicle authorized to use such lights.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2016

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 23 Nay 2 (03/15/2016)